

## They'll Take Care of You by [midas\\_touch\\_of\\_angst](#)

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**Summary:**

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# They'll Take Care of You

## Author's Note:

Sorry I had a bad day and Stranger Things was on my mind so this happened. Also I didn't do any editing so sorry for the inevitable mistakes.

Mike thought that they'd take care of her.

He supposed he wouldn't really know if they would have, as she'd been gone within the hour he'd promised her that. His parents didn't even have a chance to meet her, even though she'd lived in their basement for a week. Still, he'd been hopeful, he knew that at least his Mom would listen to him sometimes, and he'd kinda forgotten that his friend was getting hunted by a government agency.

But then she was gone. She'd left, disappearing into the world they'd been fighting. Reality had hit him soon after, when he'd been dragged back to his house, and the government agents made him sit down as they instructed him in an annoyingly calm way, as if he didn't just watch his friend disappear in front of his eyes, as if he wasn't sure if she was alive or dead, as if the very people talking to him weren't the reason she was gone in the first place. Of course he'd been uncooperative, what else did they expect?

Nancy was apparently just as bad, because the two of them had gotten a serious scolding from the parents once the agents had left; first for hiding a "Russian spy", and then for being rude to the agents of the government who were "only trying to protect their country." Mike and Nancy had both shut up, nodding and refusing to look their parents in the face. At least their Mom sounded disappointed rather than angry, and the two of them just kept nodding until they were allowed upstairs. Mike and Nancy sat in his room in silence until they were sure their parents didn't follow them up, and then Mike started to cry, and Nancy started to cry and soon they were crying together, not even bothering to cheer each other up. It wasn't worth the effort.

Their parents didn't notice. They eventually did notice that they were upset, chalking it up to whatever the agents had told them had

happened, and let them visit Will in the Hospital. That had made Mike feel a little better for a little bit; after all, his best friend was back and he seemed okay. Of course, then he had to return home, and he once again realized there wasn't anybody to hide in the basement, nobody to sneak Eggos to while nobody was looking. Instead, he sat in the basement and tried to contact her, wondering if she could hear him like she'd heard Will. He heard nothing.

It was a few weeks later when Will could play Dungeons and Dragons again. Playing with his friends was a nice distraction, and it was good to have some form of normalcy. Still, it seemed like a lot of the time Dustin and Lucas would glance at the blanket fort when they thought he wasn't looking, and Will was sometimes a lot quieter, staring at the wall until they called out to him.

Mike eventually started a Routine. Every day, after Dinner and when no one was looking, he'd sit in her old fort and try to talk to her. He didn't know if she could hear him or not. He didn't know if she couldn't respond or *wouldn't*. Somehow the latter seemed worse, though it took til day 56 for him to understand why. He didn't want her to have stopped caring about him.

By Day 78, he wondered if maybe she had.

The boys would talk about the events of the Upside-Down whenever they were sure nobody could hear them, try to talk out their feelings, but Mike didn't want to open up too much. The boys knew he missed her, and had missed Will, and he really didn't want to give Dustin an excuse to ask about the Cliff Incident. He really didn't want to talk about what he was feeling then, or how it had gotten worse.

It was around Day 105 when his Dad had yelled at him again.

His teacher apparently had called, concerned that Mike's grades were slipping. Mike honestly couldn't bring himself to care about schoolwork, not after all that had happened. His Dad had yelled at him, that he should care more about school, that there wasn't any

excuse for letting his grades drop, that he'd be grounded if another call came through. Mike wanted to fight back, but there wasn't anything he could say. So once his Dad finally paused to take a breath, Mike just stood up and left.

He honestly didn't care if he got grounded. Nothing mattered anymore.

While he sat in his room, Nancy walked in. Mike blankly asked if she was there to deliver a message from Dad. Instead, Nancy simply handed him his walkie-talkie. As he stared at it, and then her, she explained that she figured he wouldn't want to sneak to the basement to use it. She didn't explain how she knew he'd need it, and he didn't ask. Once she left, he asked Her, like he did every night, if she was safe, if she was okay, if she could speak to him. He started to cry again, something not that unusual in his Routine, but what was unusual was the new question he had. He wanted to know if she was mad at him.

Day 213 was the start of Summer. His report card wasn't as bad as his parents said it was, but it certainly wasn't an improvement from last year. His Dad had told him that he was going to lose his DnD Privileges if next year didn't improve. Normally, during these rants, Mike would just sit and listen and pretend he cared, something that Nancy also did when she was scolded for sneaking out to Steve's house or Barb's parents' place; they both figured out pretty quickly that was the best thing to do. However, this threat put Mike over the edge. DnD was his chance to hang out with his Party, his *friends*. It was their thing, their game, their chance to escape the world they were stuck with. That and his Routine were the only things he couldn't lose.

So he promised. He said he'd study, he said he'd be alright. His Dad had nodded, his Mom had nodded, but Nancy just looked at him sadly. She knew he would do nothing different. She wouldn't, either.

On Day 300, Mike snapped.

His parents had been talking about recent rumors of Russian Activity; nothing anywhere within a hundred mile radius of Hawkins, of course, but what else were they supposed to talk about?

He'd been planning to just eat fast and go downstairs to start his Routine, but he stopped when his Dad mentioned her.

He stared as his Dad simply said that they hadn't had anything from the Russians since the Incident last autumn, and Mom had told him she was still worried; the Russians had gotten a spy in before, they could probably do it again.

They didn't even look at Mike as they talked. Nancy did; she shot him a worried, fearful glance, but Mike barely noticed. He was focused entirely on his parents' conversation, and his blood was boiling.

The last straw was when his Dad brought her up specifically. He said that she was probably some kind of Russian Experiment Freak, and she hadn't come back so she probably never would. And that was all he had to stay.

Mike screamed. He could see Nancy at the other end of the table, flinching as he started cussing and yelling, less because of the clatter and more because she knew this wouldn't end well. He could see his Mom pick up Holly and take her upstairs so she couldn't hear the words he was screeching. And he could see his Dad staring at him passively, not sure if he was angrier than before or simply unbothered, like he always was, like *everyone always was*. Mike couldn't take it, he started yelling that there was nothing they could do, that the world was shitty enough as it was and he didn't need his Dad to remind him, that he shouldn't be dealing with this crap anyway, that he just wanted to be left *alone*, that he wanted them to stop talking about her as if they knew who she was, as if they knew the things he did, as if they knew what he'd been through. They had to stop talking about her as if she was a monster, or a freak, or a demon. She was better than anyone he'd ever known, and definitely better than *them*.

That was when his Dad yelled over him. Mike's privileges would be revoked, he would go up to his room until he was ready to apologize. Mike informed him that he would be in his room for a couple months

then, before he stormed off, hoping that Nancy would remember to bring him his walkie-talkie, hoping that his parents wouldn't catch her if she did, hoping that maybe today was a bad enough day that he'd finally get a response.

On the way up, he met his Mom on the staircase. They stared at each other for what felt like forever, as he wondered what she was going to say to him. Finally, she said that he really shouldn't yell at his Father, and he said that his Dad deserved it. As Mom was about to speak again, Mike interrupted her and asked if she would have protected her.

This startled her, causing her to pause for a second. So he asked again, if she would have kept her away from the government, kept her away from the people who wanted to use her and hurt her and take her away. They then stared at each other for a long time, until Mom finally said that he shouldn't have hidden her, that she wasn't his responsibility and she was probably a Russian Spy anyway. At that point, he walked right past her and stopped listening.

Nancy did bring him his walkie-talkie, and informed him that she would try to convince his parents to at least let him talk to his friends, and left once she realized he wasn't going to respond, letting him know that he could sneak to her room if he needed anything.

He sat for another few minutes, staring at the walkie-talkie. He stared until he heard his parents go to bed, until all the lights were out, until he was pretty sure everybody was asleep. Then he picked it up, turned it on, and said her name.

"Eleven?"

And then he burst into sobs.

He thought they'd take care of him.